



POCKET PC Expert

Pocket PCs now have all mainstream Office applications except a database. Steve Clack comes to the rescue with a round-up of the best programs, from simple list-makers to more complicated packages



WINDOWS MOBILE 5.0 FINALISED

Details of the new Windows Mobile 5.0 Pocket PC operating system have been finalised, and handhelds may even be shipping with the new OS by the time you read this.

Highlights of Windows Mobile 5.0 include support for embedded images, tables and numbered lists in Pocket Word and a long-awaited charting facility in Pocket Excel. These core applications have been renamed Word Mobile and Excel Mobile. PowerPoint Mobile, a new presentation viewer, has been added to the suite, along with a new version of Windows Media Player and support for future devices with non-volatile memory and internal hard disks. The new OS also supports USB2.0, enabling much faster ActiveSync and file transfers with the new ActiveSync 4.0, which is released at the same time. See www.microsoft.com for details.

■ SUDOKU ON YOUR POCKET PC

If you're hooked on Sudoku, you're in luck. SuDoku Master for the Pocket PC comes with more than a million puzzles and costs \$15 (around £8) from www.mastersoftmobilesolutions.com.

■ WIKIPEDIA NOW WITH PICTURES

Wikipedia, the giant free encyclopedia that's available for Pocket PC through the TomeRaider reader (www.tomeraider.com) now includes images. New editions contain the same 500,000 or so hyperlinked articles but, unlike the text edition, must be bought on disc rather than downloaded for free. They are available with 90,000-150,000 images at three different image resolutions. The largest edition is around 2.6GB and the smallest is just over 900MB, so you'll need lots of memory. They cost €15 (around £10) from <http://members.chello.nl/epzachte/Wikipedia/Order.html>.



With the addition of a PowerPoint viewer to Windows Mobile 5.0 (see Pocket PC News, left), the only mainstream Office application missing from the Pocket PC is a database. This is a pity as many of us would like to create a database of our CD or DVD collections, favourite recipes or details of books we've read. Although this kind of data can be stored in Excel, it's not ideal. A basic database along the lines of the one included in Microsoft Works would be a far better way to store records – especially if it could exchange data with common desktop databases such as Access.

Happily, there are several database applications available for Pocket PC. Some are powerful and

come complete with Access-compatible data viewers; others are simple and perfect for keeping track of collections and so on. Here we review the three best options for those who want to keep things simple and cheap.

CONTACT

POCKET PC EXPERT

If there is anything you would like to see covered in *Pocket PC Expert*, please contact us at the address below

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HINTS & TIPS HANDHELD WORD PROCESSING

TOP TIPS FOR POCKET WORD

Pocket Word is a useful tool for drafting documents and viewing Office files on the move. Here's a selection of tips to help you get the best from it.

1 Pocket Word is better for jotting down quick memos than the Pocket PC Notes application. You can add scribbled writing, sketches and voice annotations using the Writing, Drawing and Recording options on the View menu, just as you can with Notes. But you can also style text using bold, italics and heading fonts to give it a clearer, more readable layout. If you use Pocket Word to make lists or meeting notes, use the bulleted list feature to split the text into neat blocks. To do this, tap on the double-arrow icon at the bottom of the screen to bring up the formatting toolbar, then tap the Bullets icon on the far right.

2 Pocket Word comes with handy templates for memos, meeting notes, telephone logs and extended to-do items. To access these, open Pocket Word and in the File list view tap the Tools menu at the bottom of the screen and choose Options. In the drop-down Default template dialog you'll see a list of available templates. Pick the one you want and tap OK. You'll be taken back to the list view. From here you can tap the New menu at the bottom-right to create a new document using your chosen template. Every time you create a new Pocket Word file it will use the same template until you change the default template setting again. This can be a nuisance, but there's no way around it.

Creating your own templates is incredibly easy: just make a new document containing all

the text and formatting you want, then go into the Save Document As option under the Tools menu (on recent Pocket PC versions it's under the File submenu). From there, give the template a suitable name and choose to store the document in the Templates folder. This will automatically turn your file into a template rather than a standard Word document. You can then access it from the Options menu as described above.

3 Pocket Word provides limited formatting options and, unlike Microsoft Word on the desktop, it doesn't allow you to apply pre-formatted styles such as headings. Getting anything beyond a basic document to look exactly the way you want it is very time-consuming, so unless you really need to create a fully polished document on the handheld, we suggest you limit your formatting to bold, italics, underlining and bulleted lists. These will all be successfully carried over to your desktop PC during the next ActiveSync, and you can then format headings in desktop Word, which is much quicker.

4 If you use your Pocket PC just to carry desktop Word documents, be careful with your ActiveSync settings. By default ActiveSync converts Word documents into Pocket Word documents, losing items such as headers and footers in the process. In ActiveSync select Tools, Options, Rules, Conversion settings and specify No Conversion when moving Word documents from desktop to device. Your headers and footers will now be preserved. You can still view the document on your Pocket PC, but be careful not to change it.



REVIEW DATABASE

MOBILEDB.COM MobileDB

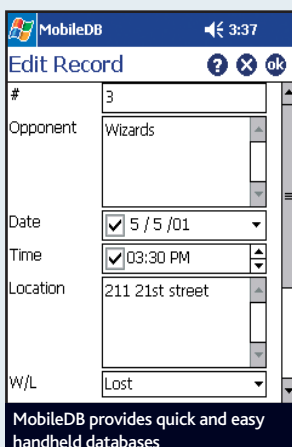
RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$30 (around £17), including Microsoft Excel or Access converter
DETAILS www.handmark.com

If you want to do nothing more than set up a few simple databases to keep track of your DVD collection, details of sporting fixtures and restaurants you've visited, MobileDB is hard to beat. The program takes just minutes to learn, and setting up a new database is a simple matter of naming each field and assigning it to one of the seven available field types.

As well as fields for text, notes and numbers it offers date and time fields, checkboxes and pop-up lists containing your own entry options. You won't find any advanced features such as relational links to other database files or support for images, but you can password-protect your files to keep your data safe, and it's easy to exchange data with Microsoft Excel or Access using a desktop component. These converters support only MobileDB's limited field types.

MobileDB isn't fabulously powerful, but it's all most of us need and is simple enough even for novices to use. There is a wealth of useful free databases available for download, too.



MobileDB provides quick and easy handheld databases

✓ Very quick and easy to learn

✗ Rather basic feature list

REVIEW DATABASE

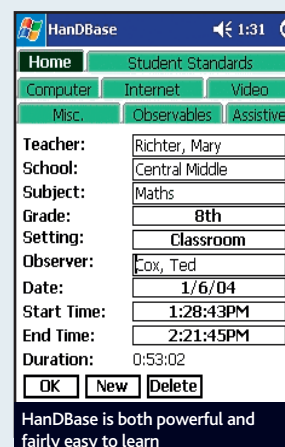
DDH SOFTWARE HanDBase Plus

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$30 (around £17); \$40 (around £23) for Professional Edition
DETAILS www.ddhsoftware.com

If MobileDB is a little too basic for your needs, HanDBase is a good compromise between MobileDB and full-blown Microsoft Access clones. At its simplest level HanDBase isn't much harder to learn than MobileDB but the main benefit is that it supports more field types, such as calculated fields that can add, subtract and multiply numbers from other fields, for example.

You're much less likely to run out of steam with HanDBase as your database expertise grows. The program allows you to use lookup fields from separate database files and even supports full relational linking if you need it. By default, your databases have a basic layout similar to that of MobileDB, but if you pay an extra \$10 (around £6) for HanDBase Professional, you get an add-on forms designer that allows you to lay out all your fields and headings to make files look slick and polished. The forms designer isn't very intuitive, but it gets the job done and it runs on either your desktop or Pocket PC. The Professional Edition also includes Microsoft Access synchronisation.



HanDBase is both powerful and fairly easy to learn

✓ A good balance of power and ease of use

✗ Takes a little effort to master

REVIEW DATABASE

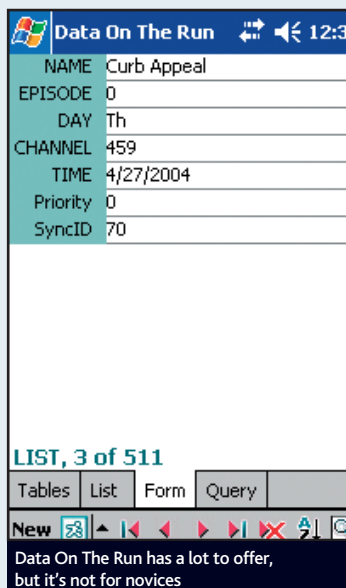
BIOMOBILITY Data On The Run

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$15 (around £8)
DETAILS www.biomobility.com

If you're familiar with database terminology such as tables, lists, forms and queries, Data On The Run is well worth investigating. Although it's designed primarily as an Access companion, it allows you to create databases directly on the handheld, so you don't even need a copy of Access to use it.

It will undoubtedly leave novices scratching their heads, but if you know your way around a database, you'll find that it's a powerful application at a bargain price. It can seem sluggish when working with large files, but it provides a powerful set of sorting, searching and filtering tools, and if you happen to use Access it'll synchronise files between your handheld and desktop very nicely. Data On The Run is unnecessarily complicated for most of the quick-and-simple databases you're likely to keep on your Pocket PC, but for complex projects it's an excellent choice.



✓ Powerful; good Microsoft Access compatibility

✗ Definitely not for database novices

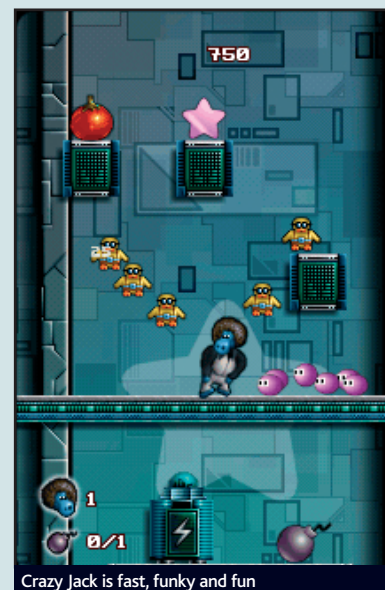
REVIEW GAME

INT13 Crazy Jack

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE \$13 (around £7)
DETAILS www.int13.net/crazyjack.htm

With so many sophisticated simulations and interactive adventure games around, you might think that traditional platform-style games are falling out of fashion. If they are, Crazy Jack will draw people back into the genre. You control a blue-skinned moose whose mission is to leap around the screen, defusing bombs and picking up the usual array of power-ups, as well as dodging killer canaries and other deadly foes. Dazzling graphics and sound aside, Crazy Jack's 60-plus levels provide plenty of variety, with backdrops that cover six worlds from snow scenes to high-tech backgrounds. Progressing through the levels isn't easy, but the tongue-in-cheek *Saturday Night Fever*-style dancing moose adds plenty of comedy to the mix to keep you coming back. **CS**



Crazy Jack is fast, funky and fun

✓ Dazzling action; great fun to play

✗ Progressing through the levels is quite tricky